

GISELLE 'The Fairies of the Forest'

ONE of the group of big ballets to be presented by Mlle. Anna Pavlova, M. Mikail Mordkin and the Imperial Russian Ballet at the Salt Lake theatre, is Giselle. The technical difficulties presented and the tremendous demands made by it upon the artists are such that it is seldom attempted, and it may be said, has not been successfully presented since the days of Grief and Taglioni until the present revival by Mordkin.

Giselle is a dainty, piquant French romance in two acts, with a tender vein of tragedy underlying every moment. A quaint legend of the period of Louis XV, when the French peasantry expressed the dreamy romance of their uncultured souls through belief in wood nymphs, fairies, goblins and witchcraft, furnished Theophile Gautier, the poet, with the material for the libretto. Adolphe Adam, the composer, breathed life into the poem and clothed it with entrancing music—the result of her joint labor being a work that justifies its popularity and which will live forever.

The opening scene represents a village in the heart of the wine-growing district. It is vintage time and gaiety is the order of the hour. Here dwells the simple, lovely Giselle, a maid beloved by all, but especially by two village lads—Hans, the gamekeeper, and Loys, a youth of mystery. Loys came into the life of the hamlet unknown and unannounced, accompanied by a boon companion, Wilfried, from whence no one knew and for what purpose no one could fathom, unless it might be to pay court to the beautiful Giselle, a task he set about assiduously.

Together Loys and Wilfried took up their abode close to that of France's fairest daughter. Their many character and pleasant ways soon won them a place in the hearts of the villagers—that is, all save Hans, who regards the advent of Loys as detrimental to his own quest for Giselle's hand.

Such is the status of affairs when the curtain rises, disclosing Hans surveying the home of the object of his affection and that of his rival, close by. Loys' door swings open and he emerges with Wilfried, who is pleading with him. Scouting an opportunity to penetrate the mystery that surrounds Loys, Hans secretes himself and listens. Wilfried's words and demeanor make it apparent that Loys is his superior, and that Wilfried seeks to dissuade him from his purpose. But just at the moment that it appears the fates had given Loys' secret into the gamekeeper's hands, Loys orders Wilfried to be gone and say no more.

Wilfried moves unwillingly away, and Loys alone proceeds to Giselle's cottage. He knocks softly at the door, and Giselle comes forth joyously to meet him. Showering evidences of affection upon him, Giselle tells Loys of the terrors the night has had for her; she has dreamt again and again that he had deceived her.

Loys, red-faced with confusion, protests his honest and undying love.

"Take heed that you never do deceive me," she cries, "for if you do I shall surely die."

Hans, who has witnessed this scene, and whose love for Giselle is such that he is consumed with jealousy, can restrain himself no longer. He rushes to Giselle and upbraids her.

"I love him, and all the world may know," cries Giselle. And Hans departs in anger, vowing to take revenge. Nor is his revenge long delayed. The grape harvesters troop by, heading for the vine-clad hills, but Giselle, in her happiness, stops them. Her high spirits find expression in dancing. All are carried away by the dance and join in it. The festivity is at its height when Giselle's mother, Berthe, arrives. She stops her daughter and warns her not to succumb to her passion for dancing lest it possess her after death. Then she relates the ancient legend.

With wonder written on their faces the village lads and lassies hand on her words as she tells of the mad moonlight revels that follow the stroke of midnight when the fairies of the forest emerge from their graves to do the steps of the dance of death. Beautiful as the moonbeams that play about them, soft as the whispering nocturnal breezes that make music for them, graceful as the forest branches, the vagrant eddies lose in sympathetic rhythm, these bewitching sprites are cursed. In the presence of their irresistible charms, woe to the traveler who meets them. To dance with them is his fate—to dance and dance and dance madly on until death ends the spell.

The mellow sound of the hunter's horn cut short the old woman's story at its climax. A party of noblemen and grand ladies, wearied with the chase, clatters toward the village. The peasants hasten to meet them, but Loys falls back. A bevy of grape-pickers merrily seize upon him, insisting that he should join in the welcome to the hunters. Loys vainly seeks to escape to the shelter of his cottage. He is good-naturedly struggling with the villagers, when Hans, the gamekeeper, arrives. What he heard pass between Loys and Wilfried but a short time ago, coupled with Loys' present attitude, fills him with suspicion. The moment he has long sought has arrived, and he slips into Loys' cottage to investigate for himself.

The hunting party proves to be that of the prince regent and his daughter, Bathilde, whose attendants lead them to Berthe's cottage, where Giselle meets them and makes tender of her homely hospitality.

Bathilde, taken with Giselle's rare beauty, interests herself in the village girl. She questions her as to her life, her occupations, her pleasures. Berthe answers for her that her daughter is very happy indeed. She has no griefs, no cares.

"But has she any loves?" questions Bathilde.

"Ah, yes," Giselle blushing confesses, and pointing to Loys' cottage says, "There is the home of my fiancé. I love him so much that all the world would be changed, and I would die if I found he loved me no more."

Bathilde is much interested in the young villager, for is she not, too, about to be married? True, it is a match in which neither she nor her fiancé have had a voice, for they are of the noble class and questions of state rather than the dictates of the heart govern the choice of mates for such as they. But she knows what love means, nevertheless, and Giselle's happiness interests her. So Bathilde promises to give her a dowry on her wedding day, and, taking from her throat the necklace she wears, she places it about Giselle's neck to bind her pledge.

The prince, although regaled by his rest at Giselle's cottage, has thoroughly tired of the chase and decides to ride no further. He orders his aides

and attendants to ride on, telling them he will sound his horn when he wants them. Hans, happy in a discovery he has made in Loys' cottage, creeps forth just in time to hear the order. It fires his brain with a plan for revenge that takes form a moment later when Loys, who has absented himself during the stay of the hunters, reappears.

Giselle, catching sight of Loys, runs toward him and makes him dance with her. The peasant girls join him. Hans, tormented by his great jealousy, throws himself in the midst of the merry throng, and cries out to Giselle that Loys has deceived her; that, instead of a simple peasant, her lover is a lord in disguise, and to prove what he says, he produces a noble's sword and hat he has stolen from Loys' chamber. Loys, furious, dashes toward Hans, but the latter evades him by running behind the peasants. Then Albert goes to Giselle's side and endeavors to calm her. Giselle still believes; she is again happy.

But Hans wishes to pursue his revenge to the end. He recalls the order given by the prince to his attendants; and, seizing his hunting horn, he sounds it. Hunters and villagers rush up. Even the prince comes from Giselle's cottage. Waving the hat and sword, Hans points to Albert, who is near Giselle, and all recognize in Loys, Duke Albert, and bow low to him. Giselle, at the sight of this, realizes at last that her fiancé has deceived her.

The prince draws near Duke Albert and asks for explanations. Giselle shrinks from him with dread; she runs toward her cabin, throws herself in her mother's arms.

Bathilde, who has come out with Berthe to learn the cause of the excitement, is surprised at finding her unwilling fiancé, Duke Albert, in the garb of a peasant, and demands explanations.

Giselle has understood it all. In a sudden paroxysm of despair she becomes violently insane. She cries! She laughs! She grasps Albert's hand, presses it against her heart, then she repels it with horror. She picks up his sword from the floor, first mechanically, then she wants to throw herself on its point. Duke Albert runs toward her and snatches the sword from her. After a short pause, the distressed, distracted mind reverts to the dance. She seems to hear the joyful tune to which she was dancing with Loys a few brief minutes before. She dances mad step, but in an instant her strength seems to leave her. She falls in her mother's arms, casts a last look at Albert and falls a corpse at the feet of the wretched man.

It is night. The moon casts fitful shadows on the little graveyard where the grape harvesters and simple village folk laid Giselle to her final rest.

Hans, the gamekeeper, haunted by remorse, seeks the spot. He passes before the tomb, marked by a simple cross, and gives vent to his emotions. Pale mists hang over the lake at the foot of the hill. Moaning winds sigh sadly through the forest that surrounds this hallowed spot. The hour of midnight is at hand, and Hans, remembering the old legend, is overcome by fear and creeps away.

Midnight brings Myrtha, queen of the forest fairies. She dances alone first, and then, by a touch of her magic wand, calls forth the fairies. They begin to dance, but at a sign of the queen they stop, and Myrtha announces that a new companion will join them that night. The fairies of the forest make a wreath of flowers for her. The pale moonlight falls on Giselle's grave.

Giselle emerges from her tomb and dances near Myrtha. The queen touches her with her wand—and Giselle is transformed into a sprite. Wings appear on her delicate shoulders; she scarcely touches the earth now. She begins to dance.

A noise is heard and the fairies fade away. Duke Albert appears, followed by his esquire, Wilfried. The duke is sad and pale. The death of Giselle has caused him to almost lose his mind. He slowly approaches Giselle's grave, plunged in deep thought. Wilfried pleads with him not to stop near this fatal spot, but Albert orders him away.

Once alone, Duke Albert gives himself up to his sadness. He weeps. Suddenly a divine vision appears before his eyes. He recognizes in this vision Giselle, who contemplates him with pitying love.

"Albert still doubts; he thinks his eyes deceive him. Giselle remains motionless; she calls him by looks only, and Albert, as though bewitched, draws nearer and nearer. But as he extends his arms toward her, she escapes from him, floating through the air. She is calling him, in vain, Albert endeavors to reach her. At last, broken

and exhausted, he falls back. The morning sun scatters the fairies and they seem to fade into thin air. Giselle also feels the power of daylight and slowly draws near to her grave. Albert divines what awaits Giselle, and takes her up in his arms to shield her from the grave. He hears her far away and kneels before her. Giselle points to the sun and indicates that she must abide by her destiny and leaves him forever. Albert, in his emotion, calls for help, but Giselle vanishes.

Servants, responding to Albert's feeble call, find the broken-hearted nobleman prone upon the ground—dead.



ROCK AND FULTON

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THE BIOGRAPHY OF A CIRCUS GIRL

LITTLE IDA ST. LEON, who has scored such a pronounced hit in the title role of "Polly of the Circus," owes much of her success to the tutelage of Mabel Tallaferro (Mrs. Frederic Thompson), with whom the St. Leon family was associated during the first two seasons of "Polly of the Circus" when Mabel Tallaferro was playing the stellar character.

Ida St. Leon was born with a circus in China in 1892. She belonged to a circus family, and made her first appearance as a performer when she was but four years old. Coming to America ten years ago with her parents, she appeared with various circuses, including the Forepaugh-Sells and the Ringling Brothers shows. With other members of her family she was engaged by Frederic Thompson to work in the circus scene of "Polly of

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